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ABSTRACT

This study examines results of integration programs in cities relatively similar in size and ethnic composition to San Diego. Pertinent case studies, conflicting experimental research findings, and group attitudes reflected in opinion polls are described and evaluated. A summary of the major conclusions and an annotated bibliography complete the study report. (MLF)

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A STUDY TO DETERMINE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF OPEN ENROLLMENT AND BUSING AS SOLUTIONS FOR THE SCHOOL SEGREGATION SITUATION IN THE SAN DIEGO CITY SCHOOLS

A Report

Presented to

the Faculty of the School of Education

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by

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CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM AND METHOD OF INVESTIGATION

In the fifteen years since the Warren Court ruled that "separate but equal" schools were merely separate, very little progress has been made toward the goal of equal educational opportunity for all. This has been especially true in areas outside the deep South, where districts assumed that the Supreme Court was only concerned with de jure segregation.

De facto segregation has existed in San Diego for many years and yet most people, including the author, were surprised when the State of California brought suit against the City Schools, this year, for failure to eliminate student racial imbalance. In 1966, San Diego chose a limited form of open enrollment and implemented this policy with a busing program in 1968. All this, plus a compensatory education program was not sufficient to satisfy the critics within the district or without. Possibly the district was not vigorous enough in implementing its plans or possibly stronger methods were needed. Thus, though compulsory busing is not in use in San Diego, it was taken up in this paper in the hope that it could be determined whether such a program could and should be used here.

I. THE PROBLEM

Statement of the problem. The purpose of this study was to determine, through a review of selected literature, the effectiveness of open enrollment and busing as solutions for the school segregation situation in the San Diego City Schools and to determine what change, if any, could make it more effective.

Importance of the study. The importance of this study was established by the vast sums of money that poured into San Diego from all levels of government in an effort to furnish an equal educational opportunity for all students. The results of programs, such as compensatory education, had not been fully evaluated as of this writing, however, other cities had reached decisions as to their effectiveness. Thomas W. Mahen, Director for the Institute for Human Development at the University of Hartford, when speaking of the experiences of several large eastern communities stated:

> The impact of efforts in the areas of enrichment and intensive compensatory programs has provided little basis for the hope that relatively easy solutions. . .will correct the problem. In other words, busing is an intervention which faces up to the evidence about the burden which faces the neighborhood school in the ghetto (Journal of Negro Education, Summer 1968).

San Diego, then, is in a position to judge the results achieved in other large communities and determine whether its desegregation plan can be successful and if so, to what degree it must be used to be effective.

II. DEFINITIONS OF TERMS USED

De facto segregation. Webster's Dictionary defined de facto segregation as segregation in actual existence but not recognized by law. James Bolner defined it simply as "racial imbalance", (Journal of Negro Education, Spring 1968). With the rise of ghettos in northern cities, de facto segregation arose in school districts due to the neighborhood school concept.

De jure segregation. Webster's defined it as segregation established by law. This type of segregation was best seen in the "separate but equal" schools of the southern U.S. where no racial mixing was allowed by law. De jure segregation was outlawed nationally by the Brown decision (1954)

Open enrollment. The Allen report defined this program as a plan that allowed a student to transfer from a segregated school to any other school within a district, with a parental consent. San Diego used a limited open enrollment plan whereby the student could transfer only if by doing so he improved the racial balance of the receiving school and if that school had room for him.

Segregated schools. The Coleman report felt that a school was segregated when almost all of its students had the same ethnic background. The Allen report was even more definitive by stating that if over 90% of a school's enrollment was of the same ethnic background it was a segregated school.

III. METHODS OF RESEARCH

The literature used in this report was located at both San Diego State College and the San Diego City Schools Education Center. The Education Index was valuable as a starting point. It contained many helpful reports which were essential to the paper and which in turn led to other important studies. The central Library Catalogue was useful in obtaining reference books and reports relevant to this study. The Congressional Record was invaluable in leading to research that ran counter to the material found in most educational journals. This helped the author treat the subject more objectively. Other important sources of information in the area of experimental research were Research in Education (ERIC) and the Dissertation Abstracts.

In analyzing open enrollment and busing as they apply to San Diego, this study attempted to examine only results of the programs in cities that were relatively similar in size or ethnic background to San Diego. If certain characteristics were consistently found in the cases examined, the writer felt that they might apply to San Diego. It must be remembered, though, that many groups, such as administrators, voters, and teachers influence the success of an integration program and every district must measure the attitudes of its own groups when designing programs.

The paper attempted to include opinion polls as sources of group attitudes. Generally, these polls represented responses

from only 50%-60% of those questioned. Thus it can be argued as to whether they truly represent the sentiments of the groups they were supposed to measure. The reviewer felt that this reliance on opinion was the biggest limitation of the study but opinion is an important factor in determining whether a program such as open enrollment will work in a particular community.

The importance of opinion was reflected in the differing results of some of the studies used. Each position seemed to present only information which backed up a particular point of view. The educational journals tended to be liberal in support of open enrollment and busing. The Congressional Record, on the other hand, contained much negative evidence introduced by certain conservative senators who were against the programs.

IV. ORGANIZATION OF THE REMAINDER OF THIS PAPER

Chapter II contained a review of selected literature pertaining to the defined problem and its limitations which were outlined in Chapter I. Chapter II also contained pertinent case studies and conflicting experimental research which was described and evaluated. Conclusions were summarized at the close of Chapter II. An annotated bibliography completed this paper.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This chapter analyzed available literature to determine the effectiveness of open enrollment and busing as a solution to pupil segregation in the San Diego City Schools and to recommend any possible changes that would increase the effectiveness of the programs. The following information regarding open enrollment and busing was reviewed and evaluated: (1) history and background of open enrollment and busing, including an examination of selected case studies that bear a relationship to San Diego; (2) arguments for and against both techniques; and (3) the reactions of various groups within society toward the techniques of busing and/or open enrollment.

I. BACKGROUND OF OPEN ENROLLMENT AND BUSING IN SAN DIEGO

San Diego has long been faced with de facto segregation but according to the San Diego Evening Tribune (Sept. 10, 1968) nothing was done about it until 1966 when a policy of limited open enrollment was begun by the San Diego City Schools. According to the plan, parents could request that their children be sent to a particular school within the district, provided the transfer would help the receiving school's ethnic balance and the school had room for the student. It was not until 1968 that the district offered free busing in the form of passes which would be honored by the

San Diego Transit Corporation to students wishing ethnic transfers.

It was obvious, however, that limited open enrollment was not meeting the needs of San Diego. By its third year of existence the open enrollment plan had involved only 1% of the district's population. The State Attorney-General, in June of 1969, filed suit against the City Schools to force the Board of Education to eliminate racial imbalance.

In a study of big city school desegregation trends, Dantler and Elsbery (ERIC, Nov. 1967, p. 120) found:

> There are between one and three limited remedies in operation, including such plans as free choice of transfer, open enrollment, and changes in attendance zones, but few comprehensible remedies are in actual operation.

A year later, T. W. Mahen (Journal of Negro Education, Wint. 1968, p. 29) said that in communities where compulsory busing had been tried, the concept met very "loud and active" protests. He stated that many Whites felt that Blacks should "work their way out of their own problems". In two Connecticut communities, Bolton and Manchester, the voters turned down busing in a referendum but the programs were initiated anyway because the vote was not binding. Mahen stated that the controversy died down after a year or two.

II. PERTINENT CASE STUDIES

Three case studies were examined to see if lessons could be learned that would behelpful in San Diego. The most famous

example was that of Berkeley, California, where busing and compulsory computerized transfer program were used. Milstein and Hoch (The Phi Delta Kappan, May 1969, p. 524) stated that in 1968, Berkeley became the first city of over 100,000 population to integrate fully from grades 1-12. All schools in tnat city "now approximate the racial composition of the total school student body".

The city was torn by controversy but the school board did agree to form a committee to investigate the situation. The board in a study found that in the two integrated schools in the district, one of the three junior highs and the high school, most Negro students were segregated in the lower academic tracks and a certain amount of self-segregation was practiced by the students as well. The committee also found, according to Milstein and Hock, that achievement differentials were greater than ability differentials. They also felt that the most important skill not being learned in the predominantly Negro schools was language skill.

Total school integration was achieved in Berkeley in steps. The junior highs were integrated first by sending all ninth graders to one school and evenly distributing the seventh and eighth at the other two schools through redistricting.

The first major step at the elementary level occured in 1966 when 250 Negro children were bused to predominantly White schools. Milstein and Hock said that this demonstrated to the community that Negro achievement would rise without White pupil

achievement dropping.

Berkeley's plan provided for:

> (1) Provision of racial balance in all elementary schools based upon actual schoolwide racial enrollment percentages, (2) minimum school plant conversion costs, (3) equitable participation of children from all parts of the city in any necessary busing, (4) a minimum number of school changes in a child's career, (5) acceptability to the community (The Phi Delta Kappan, May 1969, p. 528).

To prevent some parents from complaining about having to send their children out of their neighborhoods, all students in grades 1-3 went to schools in predominantly White areas and students in grades 4-6 went to schools in predominantly Black areas.

In all, some 3,400 were bused in Berkeley and many opponents of the program expressed concern over the safety of busing but their complaints were answered in October 1967 when a report from the State Department of Education was delivered to the Berkeley School Board, showing that children were safer riding a school bus than at any other time during the school day.

As a follow up to the Berkeley story, U.S. News and World Report (April 28, 1969, p. 70) reported that students were assigned to schools by computers that were programmed not only to create a racial balance but also to assign students in proportion to the economic levels of the city. However, in return for all this, Berkeley had the highest property taxes in the State. The program was so well established, though, that April 1, 1969, two pro-busing candidates were elected to the school board. The results in Berkeley would have been different if the schools and community had not worked together.

In the neighboring city of Richmond, however, voters turned down a 79% tax increase. U.S. News and World Report (p. 70) stated that part of the additional funds would have gone toward busing to improve racial balance. In the same election, three new board members were elected running on "no busing" platforms. Open enrollment was not involved but rather a system of forced busing. The Richmond School District had such poor public relations with the community that, as the article pointed out, no tax increase had passed in the last seventeen years and teacher salaries were so low (72 out of 79 bay area districts) that the CTA had sanctioned the district.

The author felt that if San Diego wanted community support for any integration technique, more time and money must be spent than was the case in Richmond. Mahen put it another way:

> The problem in most cities is political. It is not a question of can it be done? Rather, it is usually do we really want to do it? (Journal of Negro Education, Summer 1968, p. 298).

New Haven, Connecticut was used as a case study in J.S. Colemen's famous report on equality of educational opportunity, for the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (1966). That city enacted an open enrollment plan to relieve overcrowding, but the overcrowded schools were in the Negro areas so partial desegregation success was realized.

Coleman felt that the plan was more successful in New Haven than in other areas because of provision of transportation for those transferring, teacher cooperation, and heterogeneous grouping in the classrooms.

Like San Diego, New Haven used limited open enrollment in that approval of transfers depended upon the effect of racial balance and space available. The difference between the two cities was the energy spent on trying to put over the program.

III. JUSTIFICATION OF OPEN ENROLLMENT AND BUSING AND RESULTS OF SCHOOL DESEGREGATION PROGRAMS

Comparisons with San Diego's integration program can be made with New York City, where a similar program was attempted in the early sixties. Dr. James E. Allen, as chairman of the New York State Education Commission's Advisory Committee on Human Relations and Community Tensions, presented a report, in 1964, that was pessimistic in reporting the results of New York's efforts. It was Allen's contention that voluntary transfer would never end segregation. He cited the fact that of those students given the option to transfer in 1963, only 2% actually did so. The problem, as Allen saw it, was that only the ghetto students transferred. Too few wanted to come into the ghetto schools. The obvious question was that if open enrollment was not satisfactory, would mandatory busing of students be an acceptable alternative?

The most important piece of research in the area of open enrollment and all phases of school desegregation was the Coleman report (1966). The work was actually a collection of various studies carried out primarily by the National Center for

Educational Statistics of the U.S. Office of Education. James Coleman, of Johns Hopkins University had primary responsibility for design, administration and analysis of the report. The educational Testing Service of Princeton, New Jersey, was responsible for the major public school survery and carried out the handling of tests and questionnaires. The questionnaires were sent to nearly 20,000 teachers who administered them in their classrooms. The case studies were prepared by a team of psychologists at Northwestern University.

In a paper for the Harvard Educational Review (Winter 1968) based on his report, Coleman stated that a survey found that the biggest difference between predominantly White and predominantly Black schools was the higher educational backgrounds of fellow students, followed by teacher quality and then facilities and curriculum. The survery, carried out by the U.S. Office of Education (1964) also showed that if these differences were corrected Negro achievement registered the greatest improvement in the same order. This indicated that it takes more than equal schools to achieve equality of opportunity.

In its most controversial section, the Coleman report stated that when true equality of educational opportunity existed, groups with lower levels of skills tended to rise and become identical with groups starting with higher levels. This did not mean that all students rose in ability but group averages did.

This statement was theoretical, though, and implied that outside influences, such as home and economic background had no effect. As Coleman put it:

> The quality of the output is not determined so much by the quality of the resource inputs as by the power of these resource inputs in bringing about achievement (Harvard Educational Review, Winter 1968, p. 22).

Coleman's studies seemed to hedge a bit on whether integration would bring about greater Negro achievement because so many variables existed but pro-busing people were quick to cite him as justification for their proposals. The author felt, however, that HEW would not have started the project if it felt it would get negative results and this could have prejudiced the study. The writer found, though, that the majority of research done in this area tended to support open enrollment and busing as beneficial to students.

Jaquith, in a paper for Research in Education (ERIC, 1967), examined the effects of busing in Syracuse, New York. When three years of compensatory education produced no measurable results, administrators decided to try busing on a small scale. Thirty Negro students were bused to high achieving White schools and Jaquith found that they made significant progress. When he interviewed them they implied that it was the "attitude and motivation" of the White classmates that made them achieve more.

If Jaquith's study had stopped at this point the reviewer would not have included it because he did not state whether the Negro students were randomly selected and representative of all

Syracuse Negro students. However, Jaquith goes on to point out that when two of the three predominantly Negro schools in Syracuse were closed down and the students bused to predominantly White schools, their advancement in reading achievement was double that of students in the remaining Negro school.

The findings of Coleman and Jaquith were corroborated by Mahan (Journal of Negro Education, p. 293) when he reported that in Hartford, Connecticut and White Plains, New York there was no drop in White student achievement when Black students were bused to their schools and the Black students had been making "satisfactory peer adjustments" as well. In Hartford, 68% of the Blacks were taking part in after school activities in spite of the fact that they faced long bus rides home. Teachers reported that 70% were making superior social adjustments and only 12% were adjusting poorly.

The writer found that the best source of negative research on open enrollment and busing was The Congressional Record. Conservative senators used this material with negative research to back up their points of view. The only worthwhile research found in this vein was conducted by Dr. D.J. Fox, of New York City and was included in an article by J.W. Anderson (The Congressional Record, Nov. 8, 1967, p. 3680). Dr. Fox matched 212 Negro students who were involved in open enrollment in New York with 212 who stayed behind in ghetto schools. In 89 of the pairs, greater gain was made (Dr. Fox does not say in which area the

gain was made) by the transferring students and in 114 cases, greater gain was made by the student staying behind. Nine cases showed no difference.

Dr. Fox could have easily controlled the results by controlling the matches and comparing a weak transferring student with a strong student in a ghetto school. Dr. Fox did admit, though, that his tests showed transferring students made greater gains in "participation and verbal fluency" than ghetto students but there was no long term improvement in reading.

Dr. Fox's criticism of the Coleman report was interesting. He claimed that the best Negro students were bused to the integrated schools so this was not a true indication of the value of busing. Studies such as Jaquith's support Coleman, however.

Anderson's article also cited the Stanford Research Institute as claiming that of 600 children bused out of the slum schools in San Francisco for one and half years, on a mandatory basis and chosen at random, no significant differences were found when compared with other slum students.

IV. OPINIONS OF GROUPS AFFECTING SCHOOL INTEGRATION

According to Mahan, the greatest factor controlling the effectiveness of the open enrollment and busing programs already described in this paper was the attitude of the people involved. This was seen in the example of New Haven. Several studies were available measuring the feelings of various groups in regard to busing, the most controversial of the measure discussed.

Nation's Schools (May 1968, p. 88) published an opinion poll based on a 4% proportional sampling of 16,000 school administrators in 50 states and brought a 45% response. 74% of the nation's school superintendents did not support busing as an integration measure and did not think their districts would either. Only 26% of those who responded felt that it would help the performance of both White and Negro students. Many administrators cited wasted time, excessive costs, and ineffective results as prime reasons for opposing the measure. 25% of those responding said that busing must be optional.

The same poll also included a sampling of opinions of board members. Of those responding, 88% were opposed to busing and 65% said that if used at all it should be optional.

The biggest drawback to this poll was the fact that every administrator had an equal vote, no matter how large his district. The larger districts sometimes had more segregation problems than smaller rural ones, many of which had no minority groups anyway. It would have been interesting to see a sampling of opinions from only those administrators faced with the problem of desegregation.

Another important group of people necessary to the success of any desegregation program were the teachers. Today's Education (March 1969, p.7) published a poll conducted by the NFA Research Division, whereby a scientifically selected sample of the nation's public school classroom teachers were to select a

statement from a list of four, that best represented their views.

The results were as follows:

> (1) Children should be exchanged between central city and suburban schools--17.4%, (2) children from central city schools should be transferred to suburban schools only--4%, (3) children from suburban schools should be transferred to central city schools only--1.1%, (4) children should not be bused to achieve racial balance--77.5%.

Thus, over 3/4 of the teachers responding were against busing. The polls also revealed that opinions did not vary according to the location of the schools (suburban, rural, or urban), region of the country, or size of the school. Here again, however, there was no breakdown as to the opinions of teachers actually faced with desegregation problems.

An enlightening tipoff as to how teachers felt about desegregated schools when they were really involved with them, was found in a study by R.B. Zamoff (Dissertation Abstracts, 1968, p. 2378-A). He collected data from mailed questionnaires and group interviews concentrating on "demographic and attitudinal" information in an unnamed metropolitan city in the Northeast. He found that:

> (1) Teachers in desegregated schools show less satisfaction with educational services and more negative attitudes toward Negro students than teachers in Negro segregated or White segregated schools.
>
> (2) Teachers who are residents in a community show less negative attitudes toward Negroes than non-residents.
>
> (3) All teachers are more likely to feel that Negro segregated schools don't do as good a job of educating students.

It is interesting to note that the study showed that teachers

working in integrated schools had more negative attitudes toward Negroes and yet feel that Negro students were better off there than in predominantly Negro schools. Zanoff's first conclusion could have been prejudiced by any unique situations that existed in his unnamed city. His was merely an attitudinal study and no attempt was made to discuss factors influencing these attitudes.

Another important group to be heard from were the ghetto Negroes. Mahan (1968) measured their opinions in two cities where compulsory busing had been tried, White Plains and Rochester, New York. In the former, an anonymous questionnaire was the tool used and in the latter it was a team of educators that interviewed parents. Only parents whose children were placed in classes where they were less than 25% of the class were interviewed. The researchers did not use parents of children who were sent to a predominantly White school and then put into a segregated class.

The results showed that while some Blacks demand separatism indications are that most Blacks felt that the predominantly White schools provided increased educational opportunity for their children.

Mahan also attempted to measure White reaction toward busing in White Plains and Hartford. Their attitude in regard to the program was favorable but not overwhelmingly so. In White Plains, 50% of the Whites questioned favored the program and in Hartford the figure was 54%. In Jaquith's study it was pointed out that the Syracuse Negro community asked for a program of cross community busing but most Whites objected. The policy finally

adopted was one of compulsory Negro transfer.

The final group concerned with the effects of integration programs was the most important, the students. B.B. Herman (Dissertation Abstracts, 1967) set up a group interview schedule that involved one hundred seventy five sixth graders in New Haven, Connecticut. Only yes, no, not familiar answers were required.

Herman found no significant difference in attitudes toward other groups from segregated and desegregated Negroes but segregated Whites seemed more tolerant than desegregated Whites. It was interesting to note that this coincided with Zamoff's findings on the attitudes of teachers in integrated schools in a northeastern metropolitan city.

V. CONCLUSION

The major conclusions of this study were summarized as follows:

1. Lack of evidence indicated that busing and open enrollment were political issues in that their success depended upon the community's acceptance. That was why the results of these programs were not consistant across the nation.

2. Open enrollment and busing needed the active support of administrators and teachers where they were successful.

3. The programs being employed by the San Diego City Schools were not creating an ethnic balance in its classrooms.

4. Voluntary open enrollment was not an effective method for creating racial balance in schools.

5. Evidence tended to indicate that on the average, when racial mixing was put into effect, achievement of Black students rose while the average achievement of White students was not lowered.

6. Most educators seemed to be against busing as an integration measure.

7. Evidence was inconclusive as to whether racial mixing created negative attitudes on the part of students and teachers.

8. Limited evidence indicated that most Blacks feel that their children received a better education in integrated schools.

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